



*Message from the State Director...*

USDA Rural Development continues to work diligently to position itself as a 'lender of first opportunity' in Nebraska. Tremendous strides have been made in making ourselves a household name across the state.

We pride ourselves in being the one federal agency that can literally build a town from the ground up. Rural Development can fund a diverse span of projects from municipal water systems to wastewater treatment plants, daycare facilities to assisted living facilities, warning sirens to fire barns, ambulances and hospitals, business incubators to business expansions, libraries to lifelong learning centers, organic foods to renewable energy projects, as well as cutting-edge technological advances and high-speed internet coupled with affordable homes and apartment complexes. These examples and many more are happening statewide every day.

The landscape of rural Nebraska continues to change, and with these changes comes tremendous opportunity. We are proud of our ability to recognize and adapt to these new opportunities. In doing so, we have positioned our agency as a premier advocate for rural communities.

Relationships with our partners at all levels are critical. Leveraging of funds is essential, allowing us to reach more rural residents. Rural Development makes it a priority to continue building relationships that foster the proliferation of our investments.

USDA Rural Development is holding true to the promise in our mission statement, "To increase economic opportunity and improve the quality of life for all rural Americans." This annual report provides a brief synopsis of the exciting things happening across the great state of Nebraska. Included are several projects with which we have had the pleasure of contributing talented staff and resources to— over \$117 million dollars invested directly in rural Nebraska. We will continue to work to develop programs that are integrated and responsive to the needs of rural Nebraska.

It is my sincere hope that you have had the opportunity to use our programs, to work with my staff, and that you intend to do so again in the near future. If you have not had this opportunity, I hope this literature will help you to understand the broad range of resources that are available to you through USDA Rural Development and that you will consider contacting us in the near future.

We remain "Committed to the Future of Rural Communities" and look forward to serving the needs of your community.

Sincerely,  **E. SCOT BLEHM**  
**NEBRASKA STATE DIRECTOR**

**CONTACT YOUR LOCAL NEBRASKA  
USDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT OFFICE:**

<b>Nebraska State Office</b> Lincoln, Neb.	402-437-5551
<b>Ainsworth Office</b>	402-387-2242
<b>Beatrice Office</b>	402-223-3125
<b>Bloomfield Office</b>	402-373-4914
<b>Chadron Office</b>	308-432-4616
<b>Columbus Office</b>	402-564-0506
<b>Fremont Office</b>	402-721-8455
<b>Hastings Office</b>	402-463-6771
<b>Kearney Office</b>	308-237-3118
<b>Lincoln Office</b>	402-423-9683
<b>McCook Office</b>	308-345-4163
<b>Norfolk Office</b>	402-371-5350
<b>North Platte Office</b>	308-534-2360
<b>O'Neill Office</b>	402-336-3796
<b>Scottsbluff Office</b>	308-632-2195
<b>Sidney Office</b>	308-254-4507
<b>Rural Telecommunications Programs</b> Andre Boening Linwood, Neb.	402-543-2129
<b>Rural Electric Programs</b> James Elliott Washington, DC	202-720-1420

**LEVERAGING**

of federal, state and local dollars  
allowed for a greater number of rural Nebraskans  
to be served.

"USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender." To file a complaint of discrimination write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272 (voice), or (202) 720-6382 (TDD).

**NEBRASKA  
2006  
REPORT**



**\$117 MILLION  
BOLSTERS RURAL  
NEBRASKA**

**Scot Blehm**  
**Nebraska State Director**  
**USDA Rural Development**

**<http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/ne>**  
**(402) 437-5551**

✖ **COMMUNITY FACILITIES DIRECT LOANS \$5,942,700 & GRANTS \$187,230**  
 ✖ **ECONOMIC IMPACT INITIATIVE ADMINISTRATIVE FUNDS \$49,250**  
 ✖ **ECONOMIC IMPACT INITIATIVE GRANTS \$132,870**

**Community Facilities Direct Loans and Grants** construct, enlarge, extend or otherwise improve community facilities (CF) that provide essential services and purchase needed equipment in rural areas. **Economic Impact Initiative Administrative Funds** provide for feasibility studies, environmental reviews and architectural and engineering studies in conjunction with present or potential CF projects. **Economic Impact Initiative Grants** develop essential CF in rural communities with extreme high unemployment and severe economic depression. **2006: 8 PROJECTS SERVING 148,981 RESIDENTS, CREATING 2 JOBS & SAVING 35. 4 COMMUNITIES ASSISTED WITH ENGINEERING REVIEWS (ADMINISTRATION BUILDING, LIBRARY, COUNTY JAIL) & ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW (HISTORIC CHURCH). 6 COMMUNITIES PURCHASED VEHICLES OR EQUIPMENT MEETING MEDICAL, EMERGENCY & FIRE NEEDS OF 4,964 RURAL RESIDENTS.**



Pictured is the OLD Lofte Theatre in Manley, NE. USDA Rural Development assisted with a \$1.6M loan to build the NEW Lofte Theatre that seats nearly 380 and offers playgoers a setting in which to relish in a wonderful play.

Full story: <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/ne/FY07LofteSuccessStory.pdf>

✖ **DIRECT HOME OWNERSHIP LOANS \$7,814,757**  
 ✖ **GUARANTEED HOME OWNERSHIP LOANS \$36,253,426**

**Direct Home Ownership Loans** assist very-low and low-income rural residents to purchase, construct, repair or rehabilitate, or relocate a single family home. **Guaranteed Home Ownership Loans** guarantee loans originated by local approved lenders to eligible moderate to low-income residents for purchase/repair or construction of a single family rural dwelling. **2006: 629 HOMEOWNERS**



Pictured is John Bahr who became the owner of a handicap accessible home in Sidney, NE via USDA Rural Development.



Full story: <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/ne/FY06SuccessStyBahr.pdf>

✖ **RURAL HOME REPAIR LOANS \$456,581 & GRANTS \$334,438**  
 ✖ **HOUSING PRESERVATION GRANTS \$70,610**

**Rural Home Repair Loans and Grants and Housing Preservation Grants** provide financing for necessary repairs to rural owner-occupied homes of very-low income homeowners. **2006: 143 HOMES REPAIRED**

✖ **RURAL RENTAL ASSISTANCE \$6,566,024**  
 ✖ **RURAL RENTAL HOUSING VOUCHER DEMO \$2,856**

**Rural Rental Assistance** provides rent subsidies to individual residents of Rural Development financed multi-family housing complexes ensuring that very low and low income residents have affordable rent payments. **Rural Rental Housing Voucher Demonstration** offers short-term supplement vouchers to eligible housing tenants of Rural Development financed rental complexes who are facing economic hardship from rent increases resulting from prepayment of the loan securing the complex. **2006: 3,678 TENANTS ASSISTED**

✖ **WATER & ENVIRONMENTAL LOANS \$10,234,000 & GRANTS \$5,501,900**  
 ✖ **EMERGENCY COMMUNITY WATER ASSISTANCE GRANTS \$403,000**  
 ✖ **NATIVE AMERICAN 306C GRANT \$84,000**

**Water and Environmental Loans and Grants** develop and repair water and sanitary sewer systems, including solid waste disposal and storm drainage in rural areas. **2006: 19 WATER & 7 SEWER PROJECTS IN 24 COMMUNITIES**



USDA Rural Development assisted the community of Colon with a nearly \$650K water project via the Lower Platte North Natural Resources District and Stamford with a near \$500K waste water project.

✖ **DISTANCE LEARNING & TELEMEDICINE GRANTS \$1,787,113**

**Distance Learning and Telemedicine Grants** allow for technology equipment and facilities that provide rural schools, libraries, hospitals and medical clinics with distance learning and/or telemedicine capabilities. **2006: HOME HEALTH CARE SYSTEM EXPANDED; TELEHEALTH SYSTEM RECEIVING CENTER CONNECTS 5 CRITICAL ACCESS HOSPITALS; CLINICAL SERVICES TO 16 RURAL END USER SITES. ACQUIRED EQUIPMENT FOR PLUG & PLAY ENVIRONMENT, VIDEO-CONFERENCING, ARCHIVING, ENHANCED ACADEMIC PROGRAMMING, PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR TELEHEALTH CURRICULUM & SYNCHRONOUS PROGRAMMING TO SCHOOL DISTRICTS IN 48 COUNTIES.**

✖ **PUBLIC TELEVISION DIGITAL TRANSITION GRANT \$294,950**

**Public Television Digital Transition Grants** provide public television networks and stations with monies to bring digital broadcasting services to rural residents. **2006: 7 TV TRANSLATORS REPLACED**

✖ **BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY LOAN GUARANTEES \$26,645,000**

**Business and Industry Guaranteed Loans** guarantee commercial loans for business and industrial development to create and maintain employment, expand, and improve economic climate. **2006: ASSISTED 5 BUSINESSES, CREATING 50 & SAVING 50 RURAL JOBS**

✖ **RURAL BUSINESS ENTERPRISE GRANTS \$417,254**

**Rural Business Enterprise Grants** facilitate and finance the development of small and emerging rural, private business enterprises. **2006: 10 PROJECTS ASSISTED CREATING 297 & SAVING 274 RURAL JOBS**

✖ **RURAL BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY GRANT \$46,810**

**Rural Business Opportunity Grants** provide for economic development planning, technical assistance and training in rural areas. **2006: EXPANDED REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SERVICES TO 11 COUNTIES IN NORTHEAST NEBRASKA**

✖ **RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GRANT \$300,000**

**Rural Economic Development Grants** provide for wide range of rural economic development and job creation projects to improve the economic condition of rural areas. **2006: EXPANDED EXISTING CRITICAL CARE ACCESS HOSPITAL CREATING 6 RURAL JOBS**

✖ **VALUE-ADDED PRODUCER GRANTS \$1,217,932**

**Value-Added Producer Grants** help producers expand product/commodity customer base resulting in greater portion of revenues from value-added activity being available to producers. **2006: ASSISTED 18 PRODUCER GROUPS IN AG VENTURES CREATING 106 & SAVING 30 RURAL JOBS**

USDA Rural Development assisted Cozad Alfalfa Inc. to purchase a 20MM BTU solid fuel burner providing a 95% energy replacement. Full story: <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/ne/FY06CozadAlfalfa.pdf>



✖ **ENERGY EFFICIENCY IMPROVEMENTS GRANTS \$1,825,283**  
 ✖ **RENEWABLE ENERGY SYSTEMS GRANT \$562,487**  
 ✖ **9006 ENERGY GUARANTEE \$10,000,000**

**Energy Efficiency Improvements and Renewable Energy Systems Grants and 9006 Energy Guaranteed Loans** are provided to farmers, ranchers and rural small businesses to purchase renewable energy systems and make energy efficiency improvements. Commercial lenders provide the loans with USDA guaranteeing the funds. **2006: 5 RENEWABLE ENERGY & 148 ENERGY EFFICIENCY IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS FUNDED & LOAN GUARANTEE ISSUED TO DEVELOP ETHANOL FACILITY; TOTAL RURAL JOBS SAVED 206**



Nebraska Rural Development dominated the energy arena ranking 1st in number of energy projects awarded nationwide. Pictured L-R: Congressmen Tom Osborne & Jeff Fortenberry, Governor Dave Heineman & State Director Blehm celebrate at a symbolic check presentation, the \$38M of energy monies awarded.